

STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Grant Program

SNC ID Number: 1146

Applicant: USDA Forest Service, Plumas National Forest

Project Title: Valley Creek Botanical Special Interest Area and Watershed Protection Project

Project Category: One

SNC Subregion: North Central

County(ies): Plumas

Funding Amount Requested: \$999,878

Funding Amount Recommended: \$999,878

Total Project Cost: \$1,578,251

Final Score: 82.75

PROJECT SCOPE / DESCRIPTION

The Valley Creek Botanical Special Interest Area and Watershed Protection Project is a 634-acre Category 1 project in Plumas National Forest, Plumas County. The project area is near the remote communities of La Porte and American House and the Little Grass Valley and Sly Creek Reservoirs. The Special Interest Area (SIA), in the Lost Creek watershed, represents one of the few remaining examples of Sierra Nevada mixed conifer old growth forest in the northern Sierra Nevada.

The Project will hand thin and lop and scatter and/or pile trees less than 10 inches DBH (diameter at breast height) on 336 acres; masticate trees less than 10 inches DBH on 278 acres; and plant trees on 20 acres. This Project treats 614 of 1,640 PNF's prioritized Special Interest Area locations and is consistent with Plumas County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, 1988 Plumas National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, 2004 Sierra Nevada Forests Plan Amendment, Forest Service Watershed Condition Framework, the CAL FIRE Lassen-Modoc-Plumas Unit Fire Plan, and the National Fire Plan. Systematic defensible fuels protection zones along ridgetops and roadways improve accessibility to firefighters and provide strategic locations to initiate fire suppression activities while providing protection for communities at risk.

The Project contributes to a larger plan of treatments that connects five other large landscape scale forest health projects together, including an SNC-funded fuel reduction project surrounding the Little Grass Valley Reservoir. Timber sale and noncommercial units will be combined for the reintroduction of fire at a landscape level.

Plumas National Forest will provide contracting services for implementation and in-kind monitoring, project administration, and oversight. The area will be maintained with regular under-burning by the Forest Service. The PNF has extensive experience partnering with contractors, the California Conservation Corps, local tribes, and local community partners who have received up to \$2 million in Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) project funding on behalf of USFS properties. In addition, PNF has the requisite experience, infrastructure, staff, and expertise to implement fuel treatments, contracting, and prescribed burning.

The project directly addresses critical statewide needs by restoring forest infrastructure that affects water availability up and down the state of California via the State Water Project and is consistent with the goals of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program and Proposition 68.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT TASKS / DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Monitoring Plan	December 2019
Contracting, Crew Training	May 2020 – May 2021
Implementation: hand-cut, hand pile, lop & scatter, fell selected larger white fir, other pre-burning subtasks	May – October 2020; May – October 2021
Implementation: mastication	May – October 2020; May – October 2021
Planting prep and planting	May – October 2020; May – October 2021
Data analysis and final write-up/presentation of final Monitoring Plan	December 2021
SNC Progress Reports	Every 6 months
SNC Final Report	December 2021
Estimated Project Completion Date	December 2021

PROJECT COSTS

BUDGET CATEGORIES	SNC FUNDING
Project Costs:	
Project Management	\$39,126
Implementation: thinning	\$504,000
Implementation: mastication	\$291,900
Implementation: planting	\$60,000
Monitoring Plan	\$13,954
Administrative:	
Administrative Costs	\$90,898
TOTAL:	\$999,878

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT / OPPOSITION

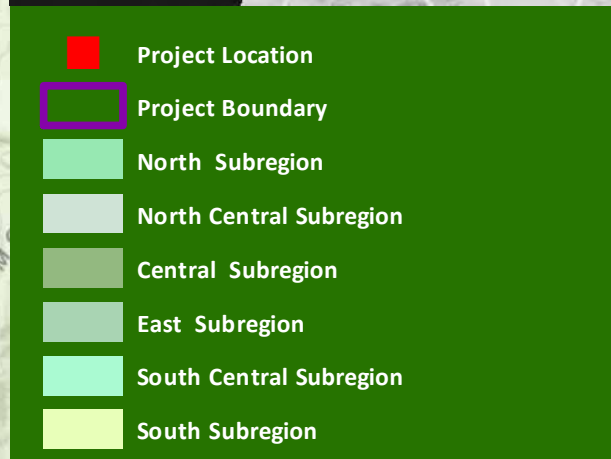
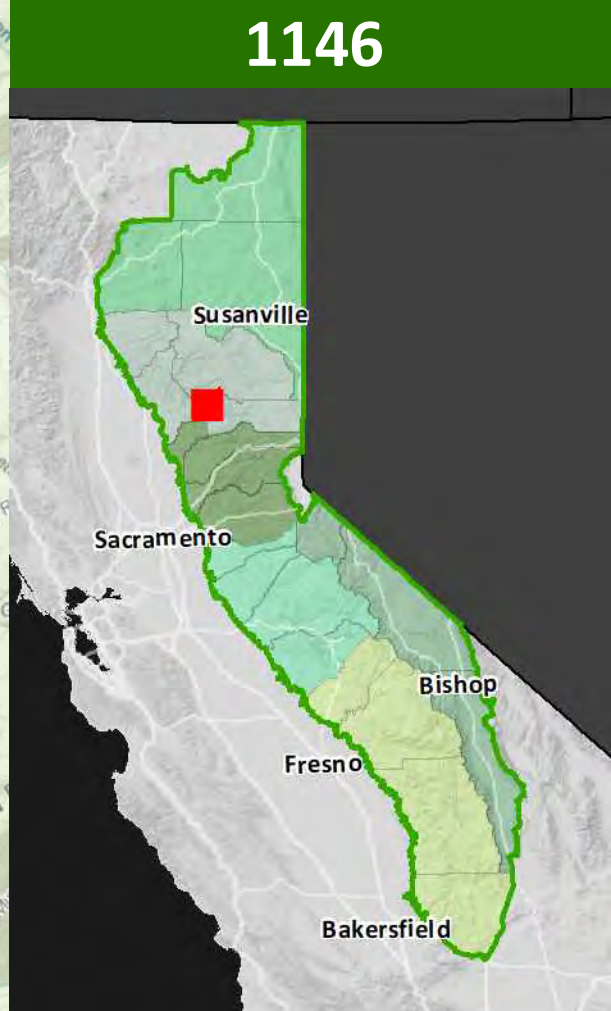
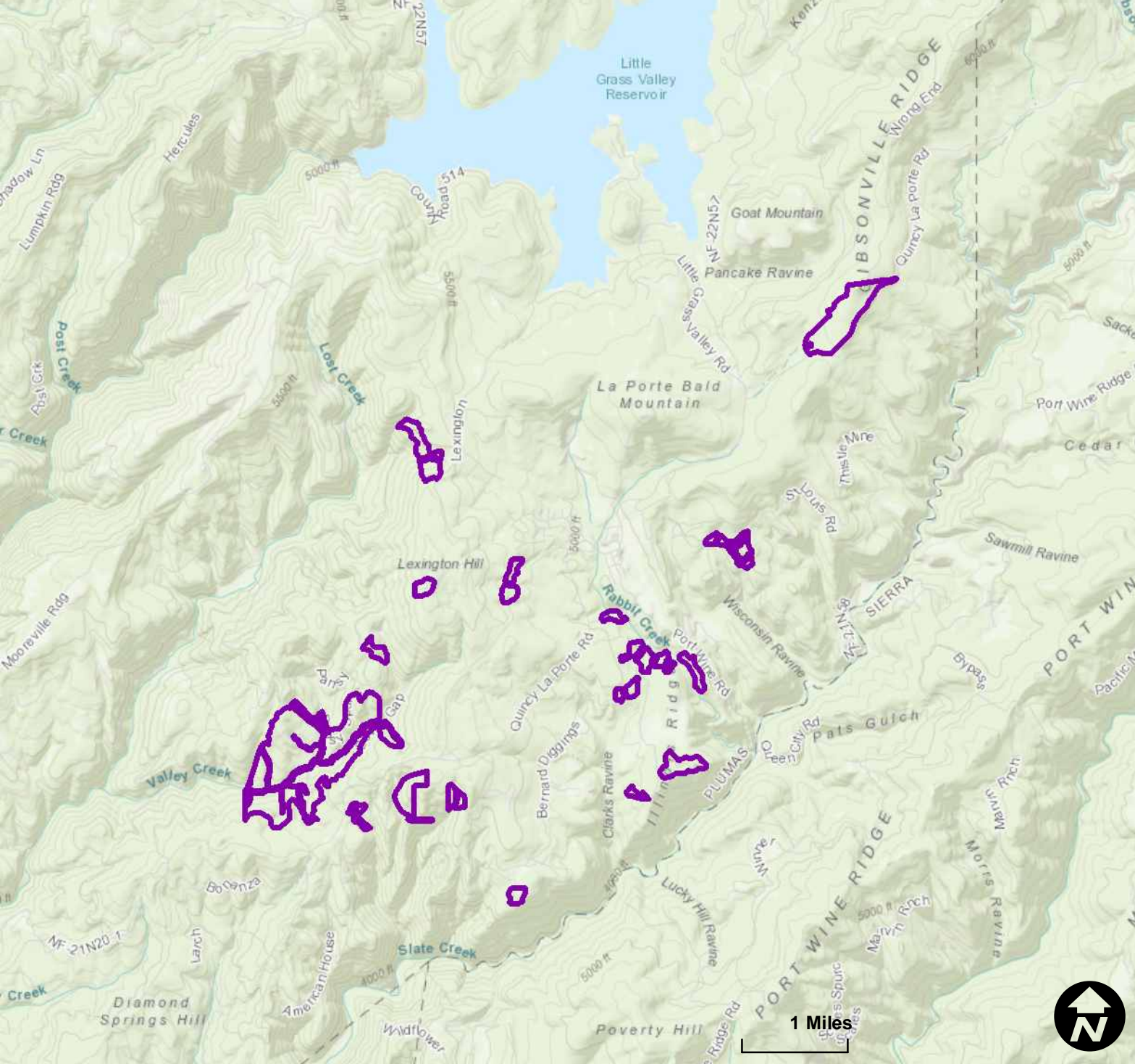
SUPPORT:

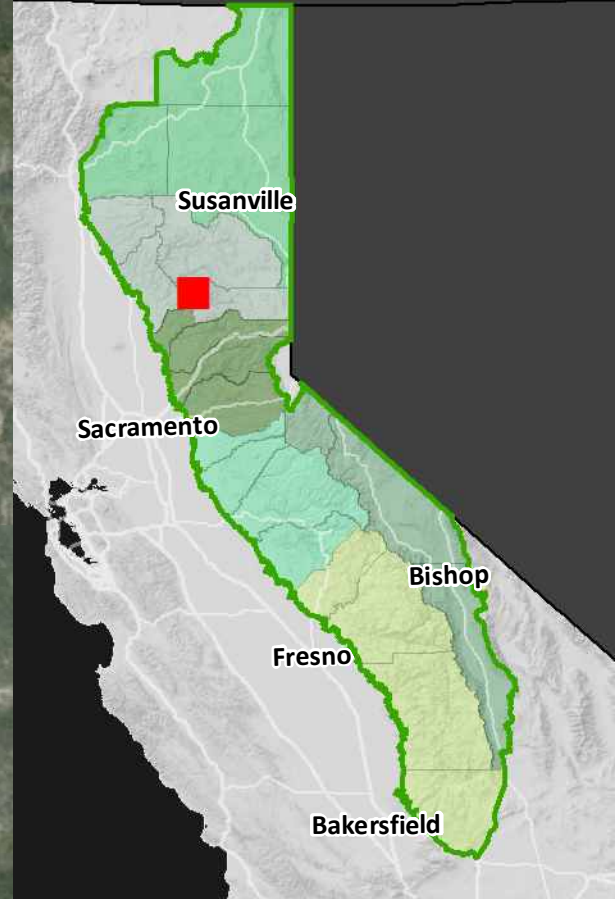
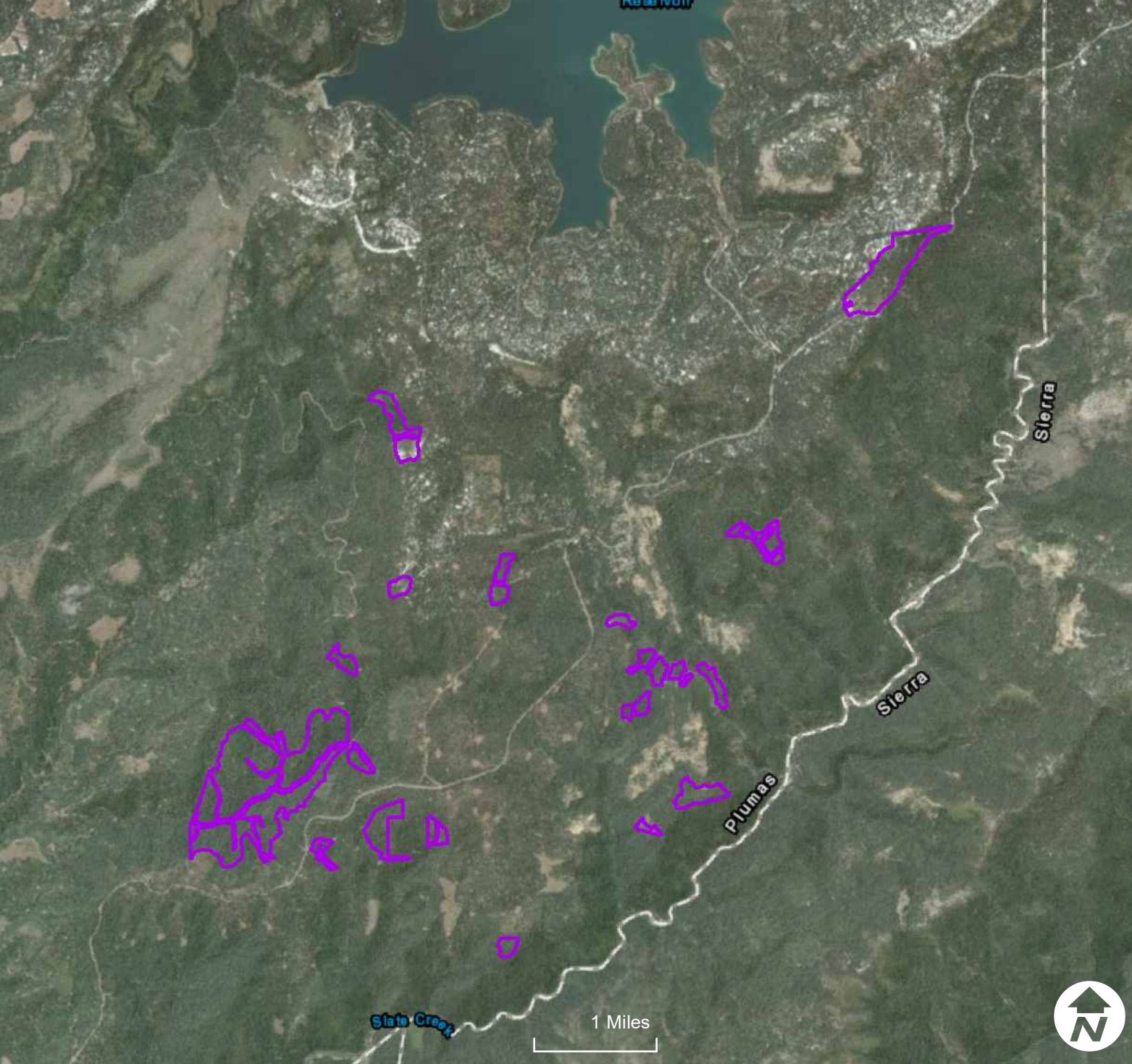
- Butte County Federal/State Land Use Committee









PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Acres of Land Improved or Restored





-  Project Location
-  Project Boundary
-  North Subregion
-  North Central Subregion
-  Central Subregion
-  East Subregion
-  South Central Subregion
-  South Subregion

CEQA Documentation

SNC #: 1146

Project Title: Valley Creek Botanical Special Interest Area and Watershed Protection

Applicant: USDA Forest Service, Plumas National Forest

CEQA:

The project is Exempt under Public Resources Code Section 4799.05 for projects to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, under specified circumstances.

- **Notice of Exemption:** See Below

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

(Address)

County Clerk / County of Plumas

520 Main Street Room 102
Quincy, CA 95971

Project Title: Valley Creek Botanical Special Interest Area and Watershed Protection Project (SNC #1146)

Project Applicant: Plumas National Forest

Project Location – Specific:

Approximately 39°39'28.67"N and 121° 1'8.01"W

Project Location - City: La Porte, CA

Project Location - County: Plumas

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide \$999,878 in funding for forest thinning treatments on 634 acres within the Plumas National Forest surrounding the remote communities of La Porte and American House. Forest conditions in the project site are overstocked, with a high level of tree mortality due to bark beetle infestation and drought. Treatments would be aimed at improving forest resiliency to pest and disease infestation, drought-induced tree mortality, and wildfire; and protecting life and property. The project would protect a portion of the Lake Oroville watershed, which provides drinking water to more than 60 million people in California. Specific treatment methods and management activities would include hand-thinning, lop and scatter, mastication, and tree planting.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: U.S. Forest Service, Plumas National Forest

Exempt Status: (check one)

Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);

Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));

Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));

Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: _____

Statutory Exemptions. State code number: Public Resources Code Section 4799.05(d)(1)

Reasons why project is exempt:

CEQA does not apply to prescribed fire, thinning, or fuel reduction projects undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the federal NEPA if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide funding to treat 630 acres of forest on federal lands. The proposed activities were evaluated pursuant to NEPA by the U.S. Forest Service in the Sugarloaf Hazardous Fuels Reduction Environmental Impact Statement. The Record of Decision was signed in September 2014.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Shannon Ciotti

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4689

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.

2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project: Yes No

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Title: _____

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.